



Participant Handout for *Holy Spirit: Creative Power in Our Lives* By Lois Malcolm

Opening Prayer

Gracious God, we thank you for this opportunity to know you better. Bless our group as we study your word. As we grow in our knowledge of you, may we also grow in our love for you and our trust in you. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Points to Ponder

Introducing the Holy Spirit

1. In her introduction to the book *Holy Spirit*, Professor Lois Malcolm says that when she asks seminary students about the Holy Spirit, many draw a blank and say they haven't thought much about the Holy Spirit. Does this reaction surprise you? Why or why not?
2. Though God is fully present, the way we individual humans experience God may differ at times or be limited at times. When you sense God's presence or pray to God, do you most often relate to God the Father, Jesus the Son, the Holy Spirit, or the Three in One?

The Holy Spirit in the Old and New Testaments

3. Hebrews 13:8 says, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." Do you think the same thing can be said of the Holy Spirit? In what ways (if any) do you expect different actions by the Holy Spirit in the Old and New Testaments? Between Bible times and today?
4. Read the following pairs of Bible verses. For each pair, discuss what seems to be the same and what seems to be different about the Holy Spirit's activity as described in the Old Testament and the New Testament. Does God still work in the world in the same ways (or similar ways) today?
 - a. Genesis 2:7 and Romans 8:11 (Note that the Hebrew word for spirit (*ruach*) is the word for "breath [of life].")
 - b. Deuteronomy 31:7-8; 34:9 and 1 Corinthians 2:6-13
 - c. Psalm 51:1-12 and Luke 24:44-49 (The promise in verse 49 refers to Acts 1:4-5.)
 - d. Micah 3:8 and Mark 1:9-15
 - e. Isaiah 61:1-2 and Luke 4:16-21

The Spirit's Impact on Our Lives

5. Read Galatians 4:1-7. What works and blessings of God is this passage describing?
 - a. In this passage, what is the role of the Holy Spirit?
 - b. How does it feel to call out to God as “Abba! [Daddy!] Father!”? What does it say about your relationship to God? God’s relationship to you? (For more ideas, see also verse 8.)
 - c. In this passage, what is the role of faith? What is the Spirit’s role?
6. Read Galatians 5:22-26. According to this passage, how does the Holy Spirit bear fruit in our lives?
 - a. What is the aim of having the qualities listed in verses 22-23? (For ideas, see verses 6 and 13-14.)
 - b. How is achieving high moral standards different from letting the Holy Spirit bear fruit in us?
7. Read 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; 3:7-12; 4:7-14. What is the overall mood of these passages?
 - a. To what extent is Paul concerned about the present, and to what extent is he concerned about the future?
 - b. How does the Holy Spirit’s gift of hope help us when life is difficult or uncertain? What are *your* hopes for the future? In what ways are they tied to God’s promises?

For Further Reflection

- What do you wonder about the nature and actions of the Holy Spirit? Invite God to show you how the Holy Spirit is working in your life, and then record in a journal what you observe over the next few days and weeks.
- What are you surprised to learn about the Holy Spirit? What makes you nervous? What are you comforted or encouraged to learn? Why?

Closing Prayer

Mighty God, we praise you for breathing life into your creation, redeeming us through the resurrection of Jesus, and renewing us daily through the gift of your Holy Spirit. Transform us with your Spirit. Give us the words to proclaim your gospel, the unwavering love to serve you faithfully, and the courage to follow wherever you lead. Through the work of your Spirit, draw us close, and conform us to Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Source: Lois Malcolm, *Holy Spirit: Creative Power in Our Lives* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2009).